Homeport User Guide

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Table Of Contents

1. About Homeport

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to act as a guide to Homeport system users. This user guide includes explanations, terminology and business procedures for the Homeport system.

Homeport is the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) tool for providing information and service to the public over the Internet. It is an enterprise Internet portal that combines secure information dissemination, advanced collaboration, and a public-facing interface for internal USCG processes.

In its first release, the focus of Homeport is supporting the secure information sharing requirements that resulted from the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA). Homeport will support this need with secure information dissemination, collaboration spaces for Area Maritime Security Committees (AMSCs), electronic submission and approval for Vessel and Facility Security Plans, and complex electronic mail (e-mail) message notification capabilities.

1.2 Maritime Security Transportation Act of 2002

Maritime Security Transportation Act of 2002 was enacted by the United States Congress as a comprehensive framework to increase the security found in the country's ports and waterways. Part of this effort establishes Area Maritime Security Committees for each US port. Each AMSC is led by the US Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) and members include business owners, state and local government leaders, and emergency responders. The Committee's primary responsibilities are to:

- Solicit advice from Area Security Advisory Committees to increase safety of ports and waterways
- Create/Submit Area Maritime Security Plan for review
- Pre-plan for joint deterrence efforts of transportation security incidents

In addition, the MSTA also affects certain vessels and facilities operating in or adjacent to US waterways. Only vessels and facilities specified in Parts 104, 105, and 106 of Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) are required to develop and implement security plans. Owners, operators or company security officials must submit and have security plans approved before continuing operation of their vessels or facilities.

1.3 How the MSTA Affects Homeport

Each AMSC is led by the USCG Captain of the Port (COTP) and includes business owners, state and local government leaders, and emergency responders as members. To support the AMSCs in its mission of securing the country's ports and waterways, Homeport provides access-controlled workspaces called Communities.

These areas provide a common set of collaboration tools that enable users to work efficiently and securely. Homeport Community Users can easily:

- Share documents

- Send notifications
- Participate in discussions
- Schedule meetings
- Assign tasks.

1.4 Vessel Security Rules

The MSTA requires that certain vessels develop and maintain Vessel Security Plans (VSP) which are periodically submitted to the USCG for review and approval. Without approval, vessels are prohibited from entering US ports and waterways.

The vessel security rule took effect November 25, 2003. Those covered by this rule own or operate a US or foreign-flag vessel and meet the applicability requirements of 33 CFR 104.105. Generally, these include vessels that:

- Handle explosives, liquefied natural or hazardous gas, or other Certain Dangerous Cargoes (CDC)
- Transfer oil or hazardous materials
- Are covered by Chapter XI of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)
- Carry more that 150 passengers on a domestic voyage
- Carry any passengers on an international voyage
- Carry more than 12 passengers to or from any Canadian ports on the Great Lakes
- Handle cargo and are greater than 100 gross registered tons
- Are barges carrying cargoes regulated by 46 CFR Chapter 1, Sub-chapter D, Sub-chapter O, Sub-chapter I, or CDCs.

Owners and operators must conduct a Vessel Security Assessment and submit a VSP to the USCG for approval. The vessel must comply with the rule's other security requirements, including the implementation of the security measures listed in the approved plan.

1.5 How Vessel Security Rules Affect Homeport

Homeport supports the VSP process by providing an electronic plan submission and approval service to the maritime industry. Industry personnel required to provide a VSP can submit it electronically via Homeport and monitor it throughout its approval process. Once approved, the plan is stored securely within Homeport and is immediately accessible by both the plan owner and the USCG.

Vessels are also by the US Coast Guard's capability to disseminate vessel-specific security information and threat products to Vessel Security Officers (VSOs) and Company Security Officers (CSOs).

1.6 Facility Security Rules

The MSTA requires that domestic facilities develop and maintain Facilities Security Plans (FSP). These are periodically submitted to the USCG for review and approval. Without FSP approval, domestic facilities are prohibited from operating.

The US Coast Guard has developed rules that require owners and operators of certain facilities in US ports to conduct Facility Security Assessments (FSAs), develop written FSPs, and implement the security measures in their plan(s). Owners and operators must also name Facility Security Officers (FSOs.). These rules are part of international efforts to increase the security of maritime transportation.

The rule took effect on November 25, 2003. US facilities meeting the applicability provisions in 22 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 105.105. are covered by the rule. Generally, these are facilities that:

- Handle explosives, liquefied natural or hazardous gas, or other Certain Dangerous Cargoes (CDC)

- Transfer oil or hazardous materials

- Handle vessels covered by Chapter XI of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)

- Handle passenger vessels certified to carry more than 150 passengers (if vessels actually embark or disembark passengers there)

- Handle cargo vessels greater than 100 gross registered tons

- Handle barges that carry cargoes regulated by 46 CFR, chapter I, subchapter D or O, or CDCs.

1.7 How Facility Security Rules Affect Homeport

Homeport supports the FSP process by providing an electronic plan submission and approval service to the maritime industry. Industry personnel required to provide a FSP can electronically monitor the submitted FSP throughout its approval process. Once approved, the plan is stored securely within Homeport and is immediately accessible to both the plan owner and the US Coast Guard.

Facilities are also by the US Coast Guard's capability to disseminate facility-specific security information and threat products to FSOs and CSOs.

1.8 How Harbor Safety Committee Rules Effect Homeport

Harbor Safety Committees (HSCs) are location-specific organizations responsible for developing best practices that contribute to the safety of the ports and waterways in their Area of Responsibility (AOR). Safety Advisory Committees (SAC) are federally mandated committees that provide industry feedback on USCG policy and regulations related to their AOR. Each HSC and SAC is comprised of personnel from the USCG, maritime industry, state and local agencies, and emergency response organizations. The members share a common need to work together for the purpose of improving the safety of US ports and waterways.

Homeport supports each HSC and SAC with communities. Communities are access-controlled workspaces that have a common set of collaboration tools. Each community has document sharing, notifications, discussions, meetings, tasks, and other capabilities. Since each HSC and SAC Community is access-controlled by its owner, an additional layer of privacy is provided.

1.9 US Coast Guard Maritime Security Levels

The US Coast Guard's Maritime Security (MARSEC) levels are consistent with the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). This three-tiered system provides for easily communicating planned, scalable responses to increased threat levels.

MARSEC levels are set by the Commandant of the USCG to reflect the threat environment to the marine elements of the national transportation system such as:

- Ports
- Vessels
- Facilities
- Critical assets
- Infrastructure located on or adjacent to US waters.

All users of Homeport have access to national MARSEC information.

2. Homeport Fundamentals

This section deals with some of the basics of the Homeport system. The topics covered include:

- Navigating Homeport
- Searches

2.1 Navigating Homeport

Homeport's navigational structure is how users interact with the system to find or publish content, submit or review security plans, and participate in or facilitate within a community.

The navigational structure is composed of:

- Tabs - areas that separate US Coast Guard content into broad categories
- Navigation Toolbar - area on the left side of the screen that helps users locate content in the channel structure.
- Channels - areas that provide a narrower focus for content within tabs. Channels may also have sub-channels which provide even more precise selection of content. Sub-Channels can be thought of as "a channel within a channel".
- Programs - areas where content is published within channels and sub-channels
- Breadcrumb - located at the top of the screen, the "trail" through the channel structure the user has followed within the portal
- Blocks - areas on tabs that provide shortcuts to other areas within the portal. These can be shortcuts to content or to other portal functionality.

2.1.1 Tabs

Tabs are areas within Homeport that separate content for the US Coast Guard into broad categories and are located close to the top of the screen as shown below.

Location of Tabs

The tabs on Homeport currently available to guest users are as follows:

- **Missions** - contains information about the US Coast Guard's efforts in the areas of marine safety, marine security and environmental protection.
- **Port Directory** - contains a public information directory each US Coast Guard port

- **Library** - contains U.S. Coast Guard marine safety, security, and environmental protection regulations, policy, forms, and publications.

2.1.2 Navigation Toolbar

The Navigation toolbar is located on the left side of the screen (shown below). Users refer to the channels listed in the Navigation toolbar to access content. Some channels within the toolbar are dependant upon user permissions and are not available to all users.
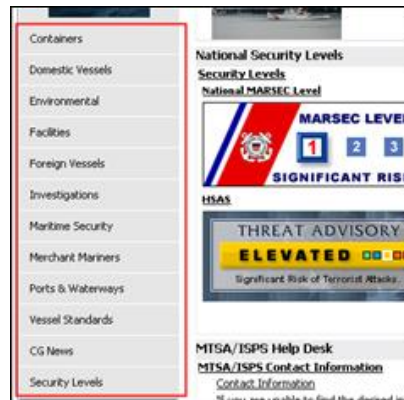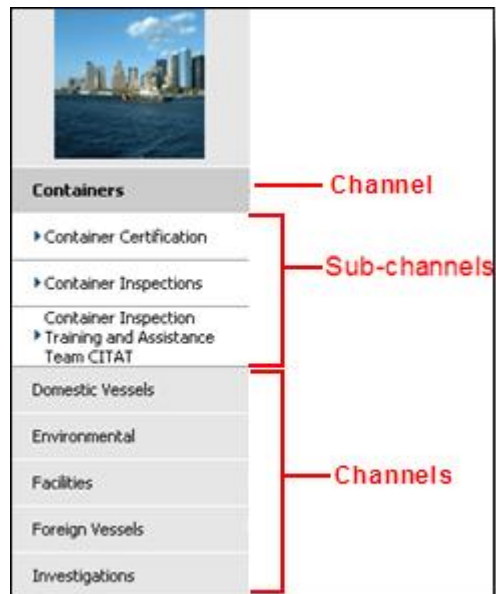

Navigation Toolbar

2.1.3 Channels

Channels serve as navigational tools that contain organized groups of sub-channels and/or programs. Channels appear on the left Navigation Toolbar as shown below:

Channels in the Navigation Toolbar

Click a channel name to display its sub-channels and programs. The Navigation Toolbar will appear as shown below.

Channels and Sub-Channels

As the user clicks through the Navigation Toolbar, the channel structure will also appear in the main part of the browser window.
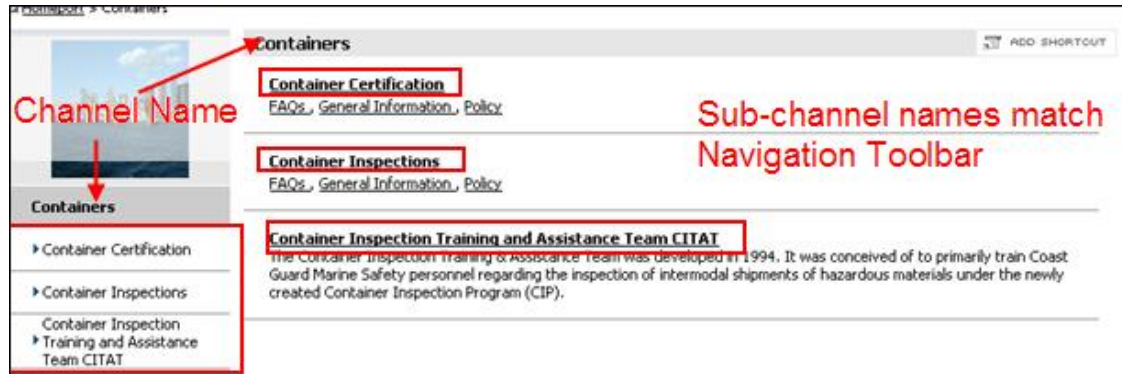
Channels and Sub-Channels Navigation

2.1.4 Breadcrumb

As a user navigates through the channel structure of Homeport, a breadcrumb will display at the top of the screen. The breadcrumb provides the current path the use has taken through the portal. Below is an example.

Breadcrumb

In the figure above, the user clicked on the **Missions** tab, then the **Domestic Vessels** channel, then the **Domestic Vessels Security** sub-channel, and finally the **FAQs** program. By clicking on any of the links in the breadcrumb, the user may navigate to any of those previously viewed pages.

2.1.5 Blocks

Blocks are located on tab home pages. These areas of the page contain content or link to other areas of Homeport, as shown below:
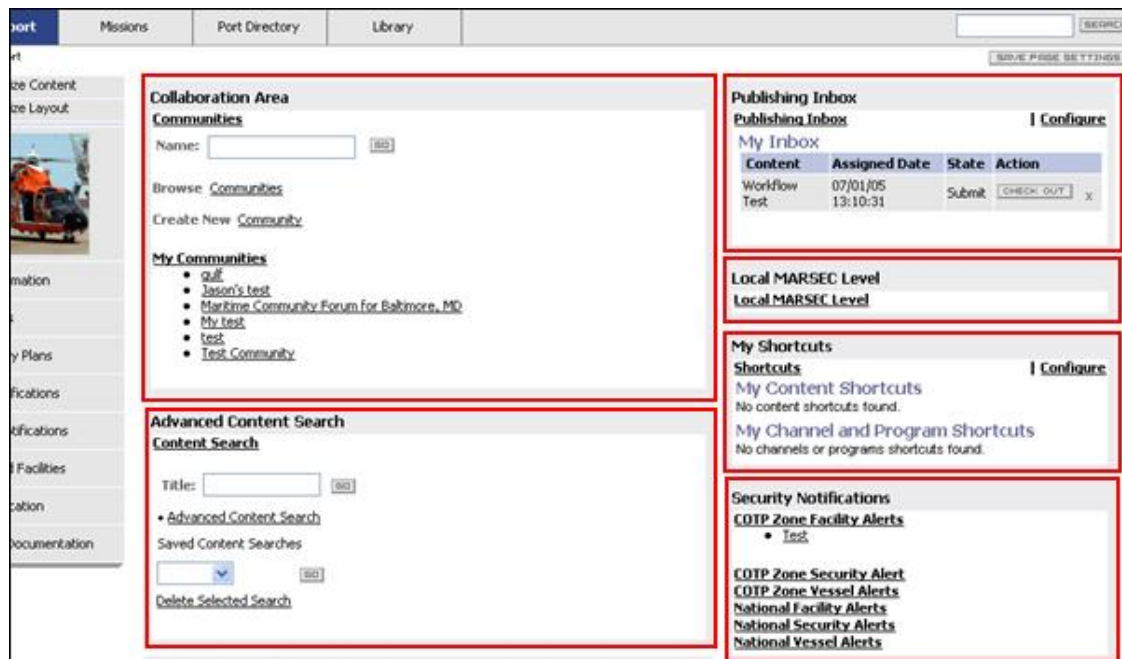
Blocks

NOTE: *The red lines in the above image are for illustrative purposes only. These do not appear on the Web site.*
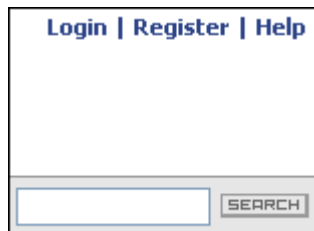
2.2 Searches

Homeport provides several different search features that allow users to find specific information. Guest users can search the Portal for content that is available to the general public.

2.2.1 Content Search

Homeport users may conduct a Content Search to locate published information in the portal. Use the following instructions to conduct a Content Search:

1. Enter a keyword in the **Content Search** field, as shown below:
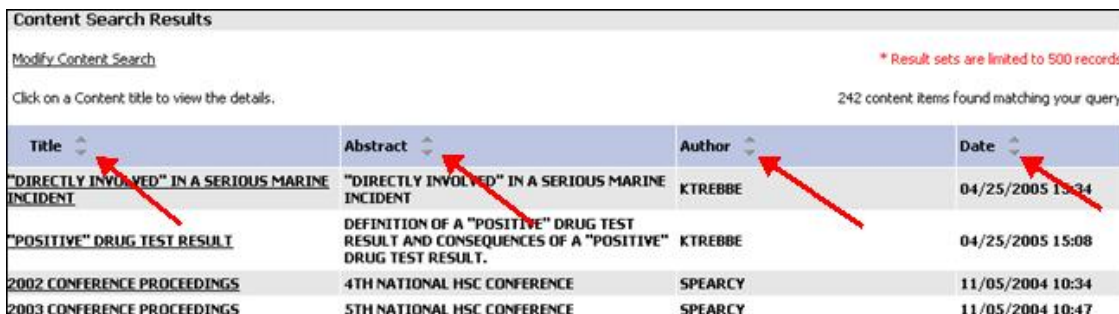
Content Search Field

2. Click **Search**.

   The Content Search Results window opens.

3. Click the link in the **Title** column to open the content.

NOTE: Users may sort the Content Search Results in ascending or descending order by clicking the arrows in each column heading.

Sort Content Arrows on Content Search Results Page

NOTE: Users can also use more criteria to perform content searches. Simply click the Modify Content Search link in the Content Search Result screen.

3. Accessing Homeport

Homeport is used to facilitate the exchange of information between the US Coast Guard and the Maritime community. Members of these groups can apply for a user account to access information concerning maritime safety and security.

Those not associated with the US Coast Guard or the Maritime community can also gain information from the Homeport system. Certain unclassified information is available to the general public without needing a user account.

For information on registering for an account, see Registration.

For information on logging in to the Homeport system, see Logging In.

3.1 Registration

All non-USCG and civilian Government users requesting an account must complete the registration form upon initial logon. Only users associated with a vessel, facility, or committee members listed within the Role in the Maritime Industry are qualified for a login. Complete the following steps to register for an account:

1. Open **Internet Explorer** (IE).

2. In the **Address** field, enter the following URL: *http://homeport.uscg.mil*

3. Click the **Register** link in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

    A Welcome screen appears.

NOTE: When the Welcome message appears, read through the conditions for Homeport Membership. Users must meet these conditions before access is granted to the Homeport system.

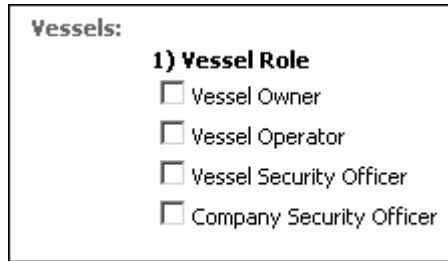4. Click **OK** to close the welcome message.

    Homeport Registry Form displays.

5. Fill in the registration form. Required fields are indicated with an asterisk (*). Registrants must also enter at least one phone number.

6. Select a *{challenge question}* from the Challenge Question picklist and enter the *{answer}* into the **Challenge Answer** field.

8. Indicate **Captain of the Port Zone** from the drop down menu.

COTP Zone Drop Down Menu

9. If associated with a committee, indicate a committee role in the check box under **Committee.**

10. If associated with a vessel, indicate a role in the appropriate check box under **Vessels**.

Vessel Checkbox

11. If a Vessel Role is chosen, users must select the vessels to associate with the user account. For more information on this step, see Adding Vessels to the Registration Form.

12. If associated with a facility, indicate a role in the appropriate check box under Facilities.

13. If a Facility Role is chosen, users must select the facilities to associate with the user account. For more information on this step, see Adding Facilities to the Registration Form.

11. Enter **Sponsor Information** if necessary.

12. Add **Comments** if needed.

13. Read the **Disclaimer** and check **I agree to the conditions of the disclaimer above**.

14. Click **Next**.

   The Preview Registration Information screen appears.

18. Review and confirm all information submitted.

19. Click **Back** to make any modifications, or click **Finish** to submit the form.

NOTE: *The registration request will be sent to an approver in the user's port. After the submission has been reviewed, the user receives an automatically generated e-mail message indicating approval or rejection of the application.*

3.1.1 Adding Vessels to the Registration Form

To associate a vessel during the registration process, users must complete the following steps:

1. Enter the **Name** or the **Official Number** and click **Search.**

Vessel Screen

The Vessel Search screen opens in a new window.
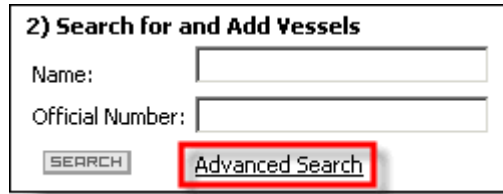

Vessel Search Results

2. Indicate which vessels will be associated with the user profile and click **Add.**

3. Verify vessels that were added or check **Vessel not found**.

NOTE: *If the vessel was not found, users can perform an Advanced Search to locate the vessel. For more information, see Conducting Advanced Vessel Search.*

3.1.2 Conducting Advanced Vessel Search

To conduct an Advanced Search for vessels, perform the following steps:

1. Below **Search for and Add Vessels**, click the **Advanced Search** link.

Advanced Vessel Search

The Advanced Vessel Search screen will open in another window.

2. Enter the appropriate data in the entry fields or select from the drop down menu.

3. Click **Search**.

   The Vessel Search screen will open.

4. Indicate appropriate vessels in the check boxes.

5. Select **Add**.

   *The vessel will appear in the **Verify the Vessels you added** field on the registry form.*

6. If the vessel in query cannot be located, indicate such in the **Vessel Not Found** check box, and enter details in the **Comments** field at the bottom of the screen.

7. To delete any vessels from the Verify the Vessels you added box, select the appropriate facility and click the **Delete Selected Vessels** link.

3.1.3 Adding Facilities to Registration Form

To associate a vessel during the registration process, users must complete the following steps:

1. Enter the **Name** and select **Facility Type** or **State** from the drop down menu.

Facilities Screen

2. Click **Search**.

   The Facility Search screen opens in another window.

Facility Search Screen

3. Indicate which facilities will be associated with the user profile and click **Add.**

   The facilities selected will be added to the Verify Facilities Added section of the registration form.

4. Verify facilities that were added or check **Facility not found.**

NOTE: If the facility was not found, users can perform an Advanced Search to find the facility. For more information, see Conducting Advanced Facility Search.

3.1.4 Conducting Advanced Facility Search

To conduct an Advanced Search for facilities, perform the following steps:

1. Below **Search for and Add Facility**, click the **Advanced Search** link.

Advanced Search Link

The Advanced Vessel Search screen will open in another window.

2. Enter the appropriate data in the entry fields or select from the drop down menus.

3. Click **Search**.

    The Facility Search screen will open.

4. Indicate appropriate vessels in the check boxes.

5. Click **Add**.

    The facility will appear in the Verify the Facilities you added field on the registry form.

6. If the facility in query cannot be located, indicate so in the **Facility Not Found** check box, and enter details in the **Comments** field at the bottom of the screen.

7. To delete any facilities from the Verify the Facilities you added box, select the appropriate facility and click the **Delete Selected Facilities** link.

3.1.5 Approved and Declined Registrants

After the registration has been reviewed, approved registrants will receive an e-mail message providing a user name and login information. **Upon initial log on, the user will need to change the password.**

Similarly, denied registrants will be notified via an e-mail message after the review process has completed. If the reviewing approver made comments pertaining to why the account was declined, the comments will appear in the e-mail message. If the user wishes to reapply for an account, a new registration form must be submitted.

Users with an approved account may log on to the Homeport system. Users without an account must become registered users. See Registration for information on how to register for an account.

To log on to the Homeport system, perform the following steps:

1. Open **Internet Explorer (IE).**

2. In the **Address** field, enter the following URL: http://homeport.uscg.mil

3. Click **Login** in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

   The Portal Login screen displays as shown below.

Portal Login

4. Enter *{username}* and *{password}*

5. Click **Login.**

   The user is logged on to the Homeport system.

NOTE: *If this is the first time the user has logged on, the password screen will appear. For more information on how to modify the password, see Password Settings.*

4. Index

6.